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SPEECH

OF

MR. SOULE, OF LOUISIANA,

ON

COLONIZATION IN NORTH AMERICA,

AND

ON THE POLITICAL CONDITION OF CUBA.

DELIVERED IN THE SENATE OF UNITED STATES, JANUARY 25, 1853.

The Senate having under consideration the Joint Resolution declaratory of the views of the United States respecting Colonization on the North American continent by European Powers, and respecting the Island of Cuba—Mr. SOULE said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: The sole object I had in view when, on a former occasion, I moved a postponement of this debate, was to protect myself against the danger of too hasty an expression of sentiment with reference to so grave and momentous a subject as that in which it had originated. I felt some unwillingness crudely to commit my judgment upon any scheme of speculative and abstract policy concerning matters liable to present themselves from hour to hour for practical consideration. And I wished for time, that I might school my mind, and prepare it to face the stern exigencies which I could not but anticipate would arise from the issues put in agitation. That time was most liberally allowed me; and I am now ready to let the opinions I have been able to mature go to the country in the unambitious form under which it will be my purpose to present them to the Senate.

Before I proceed, however, I will ask leave, Mr. President, to express my deep regret that I have to disagree, on any point, with the two eminent Senators who spoke first from this side of the Chamber, (Messrs. CASS and MASON,) I cannot join them in the favorable opinion they have been pleased to express of the course pursued by this Government, on the occasion of our late difficulties with the Spanish officials at Havana. The policy of the Administration in that, as in most other instances wherein our interests have been in conflict with those of a foreign Power, has struck me as peculiarly unwise and undignified. While it bequeathes to those who will soon have the control of the Government a fearful inheritance of difficulties and dangers, it has lowered itself to a contest in which we have seen the mighty hand of the Republic extended to strike an individual, for offenses which he had not committed. The verdict of the country has decidedly gone against it, and I am indisposed to question its justice, or to weaken its significance.

Sir, when these questions came up the first time for our consideration, I felt great anxiety lest, by being prematurely brought into debate, they might embarrass and cripple the coming Administration. May the dangers I then apprehended be

averted! I will certainly not be found recreant towards making any effort that will secure so desirable a result. Yet, I cannot forbear asking myself, why was the correspondence on the tripartite treaty called for? Had not the President's Message informed honorable Senators of its import? Did not the resolution originating the call, intimate a thorough knowledge of its character? Or did Senators merely wish to give themselves the enjoyment of its rhetoric? They meant not to remonstrate against England and France, for renewing an attempt in which on a former occasion they had been so readily indulged, as in the case of Soulouque's difficulties with the Dominican Republic;—that had been illogical. They could not wish to intimate disaffection at the President's answer;—it was all right and proper. What was it, then, that prompted the inquiry? Nothing, I am sure, but the best of motives; and yet, what could it bring forth—what has it brought forth—but a legitimate triumph to the distinguished statesman who fills, with so much credit to himself, the chair of State, and obstacles, difficulties, and dangers, in the way of the coming Administration?

Senators complain, however, that the mystery of the Cuban correspondence has been let out. Why? Is it because of the disclosure that we wished to purchase Cuba? But, in the same breath, they avow their settled purpose still to purchase it, if it should be for sale. Is it because the amount offered was divulged? But, they proclaim that they are ready to purchase it at any price. Why then should the Administration be reproved for having done precisely what we hesitate not to do ourselves? Had honorable Senators denounced it, in unmitigated terms for having transferred to the public gaze a transaction hidden in a mysterious safe, where I am told it lay under seal, surrounded with all the paraphernalia of a secret of State, I might understand them. But this they did not attempt to do; and it will be for some one else to afford us, in the progress of this debate, an insight into what circumstances, connected with that correspondence, should have imposed upon our present rulers the obligation of keeping it out of the public view.

A band of youthful enthusiasts congregate in a Southern port, at the call, as they think, of suffering brethren, and rush to the rescue of a neighboring Isle. Spain takes the alarm, and, under the promptings of the President's proclamation, which brands the adventurers as outlaws, dooms them to indiscriminate slaughter. A spirit is engendered—which soon pervades the whole population of this, her most valuable, and her last possessions within the waters that bathe this continent—which but increases her fears, and prompts her to implore England and France to devise a scheme through which she may be maintained in the dominion which she holds over it. Your answer, as well as that of the Government, is, that you will not comply with the presumptuous summons through which that scheme is submitted to your acceptance. But, at the same time that you rebuke the attempt of the proud intermeddlers by a flat refusal of your solicited co-operation, you emasculate what of virtue there is in your bold resolve by the strongest protestations that you aim not at disturbing their quietude and equanimity. And as if to give them ample assurance that you covet not the possession which they have so deeply at heart to protect against your grasp, you stigmatize all those who are in the least suspected of being directly or indirectly concerned in any undertaking that might secure it to this country. They are all "marauders"—those who engaged in the unfortunate expedition which terminated in the Atarez slaughter, as well as the stubborn contractor who, on another occasion, presumed to think that there was something in individual and national rights worth strug-

gling for. Strange marauders indeed those five hundred youths who betook themselves to a strange land, where they knew they would meet five hundred thousand of their equals, guarded and defended by twenty thousand armed soldiers watching their approach—who, upon landing, sent back the buoyant steamer that had brought them to the unwelcome shore, and at once engaged in that deadly struggle which was to terminate in the enfranchisement of the island, or in the consummation of their ruin—who left, wherever they went, but indelible traces of heroic devotion, and against whom even Spain has not, as yet, uttered a word that could attain their aspirations! What, Crittenden and his gallant followers but marauders and pirates!! See how they die! Proudly does that boyish chief who heads the column confront his fate, and protest against the degrading exactation through which he is required to bend his knee before his executioners! “I kneel to none but God! I defy your tortures! You may kill me, but you cannot kill the hopes that bound within my heart, and arraign your cruelty at the bar of the future!” Why talk you of marauders? Lafayette and Kosciusko were just such marauders.

What are the late conquests of England in Eastern India, of the French in Africa, but marauding upon a large scale? What has been the course of Britain within the last century, on the coast of Central America, but a continuous marauding? Why should Senators show themselves so fastidious about marauding, when they hesitate not to avow, while speaking of the vexed acquisition, that they but await for the ripening of the fruit? Will the plucking of it when ripe be less “marauding” than the plucking of it while still green? I had thought that honorable Senators would recollect that at common law the taking of the fruit from the tree is but a trespass, while the taking of it, after it has been separated from the *parent stem* is larceny. Let them beware lest the fruit rot while they await its ripening. Senators protest against stealing their neighbor’s property, and yet would have those who hold it under trust appropriate it to themselves. They would not commit theft, but might consent to receive the stolen goods!

Senators speak of national honesty. I revere it; for I know that nations are very near losing their power when they begin to lose their sense of justice. But while Senators speak of their abiding respect for the rights of other nations, they should not denounce the Government of a friendly Power as the worst that ever existed, and proclaim their willingness to extend the hand of fellowship to those who may succeed in overthrowing it.

Senators commend the President for his course with reference to our troubles with the Cuban authorities. I would wish to know what of it they mean to commend?

It pleases the editor of a New York paper to credit Purser Smith with certain memoranda, relative to affairs in Cuba, in the following words:

“The United States mail steamship *Crescent City*, Lieutenant D. D. Porter commanding, arrived at this port at a late hour last night, &c., from New Orleans, via Havana.

“We are indebted to the purser, Mr. Smith, for prompt delivery of memoranda.”

Then follows a succinct account of the excitement created in Havana by the imprisonment of a large number of Creoles in loathsome dungeons, &c.

A letter addressed from New York to the *Diario* at Havana brings the matter to the attention of the Cuban authorities; and thereupon an order issues from Martin Galiano, Secretary to the Captain General, addressed to the consignees of the steamer, containing the following:

"September 4, 1852.

"If Purser WILLIAM SMITH, or any other person, shall in future venture to PUBLISH IN THE AMERICAN PAPERS ANYTHING RELATIVE TO THE AFFAIRS OF CUBA, the vessels having such offending persons on board shall be denied entry into the ports of this island: and Mr. SMITH, especially, is on no account to be permitted to return here, under penalty of the above order being carried into effect and the steamer dismissed the port."

In vain does Mr. Smith, as early as the 21st of October, deny, under oath, his connection with that publication. In vain does Lieut. Porter give every assurance that he is innocent of the act laid to his charge. The President condemns Smith, and, by an order emanating from the Postmaster General, suspends the sending of the United States mail by the Crescent City, "or BY ANY OTHER VESSEL WITH MR. PURSER SMITH ON BOARD." And if you ask why this, you will be told that it is "for a 'reason which does not furnish, in the opinion of the Government, even a 'good presumptive ground for such a prohibition;'"—so reads the President's message;—"for a punctilio in reference to the purser of a private steamship, who seems to have been entirely innocent of the matters laid to his charge," so says Mr. Everett. Yet it is alleged that "the President has patiently 'submitted to these evils, and has continued FAITHFULLY to give to Cuba 'the advantages of those principles of the public law, under the shelter of which 'she has departed, in this case, from the comity of nations." And the only reason I can find for the President exhibiting this forbearance is, that "the Captain General," according to Mr. Everett, "is an officer apparently of an upright and conciliatory character." And that "his conduct towards the steamers employed to carry the mails of the United States to Havanna has, according to the President, with the exception above alluded to, been marked with 'kindness and liberality, and indicates no generel purpose of interfering with the 'commercial correspondence and intercourse between the Island of Cuba and this 'country."

Had the President—had Mr. Everett—forgotten the treatment met at the hands of that officer, by the steamship Ohio, then commanded by Lieutenant Schenck, of the United States Navy, who was refused communication with the shore, and was ordered to anchor under the guns of the Moro Castle, while engaged in peaceful and lawful commerce, and though no charge could be laid against any person on board of her? Had they forgotten that the Falcon, while on her usual passage from Chagres to Havana, after being fired into on the high seas, not far from the island, had been boarded and overhauled under the flippant pretence that the officers committing that indignity were ignorant of the character of the steamer, though she had borne the flag and mails of the United States a hundred times into the port of Havana, and was as well known to the Spanish cruisers and authorities as to American officers in the ports of New Orleans and New York? Had they forgotten the outrage perpetrated on the steamer Philadelphia, while on her route from Aspinwall to New Orleans? This steamer, with mails and two hundred and twenty-five passengers on board, had lost twenty-seven persons of cholera, and had many more prostrated and lying in agony. She entered the harbor of Havana in the forenoon of the 27th of June last, and anchored some distance from the coal wharf. The captain immediately reported to the health officer, and informed him of the condition of the ship, stating that it was indispensable to her safety and the lives of the passengers, and to enable him to proceed to New Orleans, that he should procure supplies of coal, provisions, water, and medicines. He ordered the ship to quarantine at once, whither she proceeded. But she had no sooner anchored and

blown off her steam than she was ordered outside of the harbor by the captain of the port. The captain of the steamer assured him that the fires were out, and that it would take time to comply with the order. The officer said that if he did not go out at once, the guard-ship had *her orders*, which was understood to mean that she would fire on the steamer. As soon as possible, the Philadelphia proceeded to the outside buoy, perhaps two miles out to sea. The coal lighters, ordered by the company's agent, were towed out and brought alongside; a few tons were taken on board, when the captain of the port gave them forty minutes to complete their coaling and watering; at the end of which time, under the remonstrances of the officers of the steamer and the appeals of the suffering passengers, she was driven off with only a small quantity of coal, and none of the water, the lighter with the latter being within fifty yards of the ship at the time. She had no alternative but to abandon her route to New Orleans, and attempt to make Key West. Had not the captain of the steamer been exempt from the disease, and had not the weather proved favorable, the ship would have been lost, with all on board. Coal could not be procured at Key West; and after much delay, a sailing vessel was chartered to take the mails and a portion of the passengers to New Orleans; the residue being detained, under great suffering, until an extra steamer could be dispatched by the company from New York. The company's agent, through the American Consul at Havana, entered a protest against these proceedings. And how could the President and the Secretary of State have forgotten that a month after, the El Dorado, having left Aspinwall with two hundred and ninety passengers, the California mails for New Orleans and New York, and \$1,700,000 of bullion, had also been ordered off the port of Havana? The health officer approached her off the Moro, and ascertained that a few deaths had occurred on the voyage, from the Isthmus fever, and that three railroad laborers were sick of that complaint, but that there had been no case of cholera or infectious disease on board. The Captain General, who is president of the board of health, convened the board, and the result was that the ship was ordered to sea forthwith. The captain asked to go into quarantine only long enough to procure supplies. This request was denied. The agent then desired that the ship might remain at her station, a mile outside, until he could dispatch the Empire City, another of the United States mail steamships, then in port, to her assistance. This was also refused, and all communication between the ship and the shore interdicted. The captain of the port then ordered the ship, in the most peremptory manner, to go to sea immediately. She had no alternative left but to obey, and to proceed to sea, destitute of all necessities for her voyage. The Empire City was compelled to follow and overtake her, and to change her own route to New York instead of going direct to New Orleans, whither she was bound by the company's contract with the Government. This case was also made the subject of a protest by the company's agent at Havana.

Such were those dispositions exhibited by the Captain General, which seem to have conciliated to him the good will and approbation of the American Government. But, strange to say, while our rulers here were heaping censure and condemnation on the company's President, (Mr. Law,) and on the officers and employees on board the mail steamers, the Captain General himself, satisfied with Purser Smith's affidavit, was revoking the order *excluding him, and any vessel which might have him on board, from the shores of the island.* Mr.

Law's course in this whole matter, though made here the object of severe censure, was that of a spirited and independent American. Conscious that no fault could attach to the officers on board his ships, and that the Cuban authorities, in the language of the President, had not *even a good presumptive ground* for the line of conduct which they had adopted, he hesitated not to vindicate at all risks, and to maintain unflinchingly, his rights, and the rights of those under him. And it is for this that he is unmercifully branded, in the very Hall of the Senate, as a dangerous and reckless intermeddler, and as an enemy to his country. Nor had he acted inadvertently. In a letter dated October 6, 1852, he sets forth his grievances, and asks to be advised as to whether the Government of Cuba is justifiable in the course it has been pursuing. He reiterates the same request in a second letter, bearing date the 27th of the same month. What answer is given him? Why, the Government declines giving any; and Mr. Law, left to his own judgment, hears no more of the Government, except through President Fillmore's letter to Hugh Maxwell, through the orders transmitted by the Postmaster General to the postmaster in New York to withhold the mails from his ships, and through the dismissal from their command of officers allowed him from the United States Navy.

In all this you find the Government invariably on the side of Spain, and against our citizens. Such had been its attitude in the deplorable affair of the Lopez expedition. When approached by Commodore Parker, and asked why had the Atarez victims been executed without being allowed a trial within the guarantees stipulated in our treaty with Spain, Captain General Concha answers that it is because "he considered them as pirates, they having been so denounced in the proclamation of the President of the United States." And when Consul Owen makes a solemn appeal to his clemency, the unbending proconsul rebukes him by the remark, that "he is doing what he must know to be against the wishes of his Government."

We are told, however, that the conduct of the Captain General, in the case of the Crescent City, "has been made the subject of serious remonstrance at Madrid." It has, indeed. But we may easily anticipate what the answer of the Spanish Cabinet will be. Will they not say: We claim the benefit of *those principles of the public law, under which*, according to your own admission, *we stand sheltered*? There can be no departure from the comity of nations imputed to us as long as we remain thus protected by your own avowals. And here, as on the occasion of the Lopez followers, we will be told: You have absolved us—cease to complain.

And now, recurring again to the commendations which Senators have so lavishly bestowed upon the President's course, I will ask to know if those commendations be meant as an endorsement of the President's proclamation—of the Havana butcheries under it—of the Government's forbearance under the insults offered to our flag—of Galiano's edict—of the Secretary of State's letter to Mr. Law—and of the President's communication to Hugh Maxwell?

But though Senators are unwilling to wrest Cuba from Spain in any manner that might be construed into a violation of the high pledges repeatedly made to let it remain under the dominion of that power, yet they will not have the President to repudiate its acquisition on account of any scruple he may entertain as to its expediency. And here Senators find themselves again at points with him. They are for purchasing *at any time, and for any price*; the President is against pur-

chasing at present. His unwillingness, Senators see, is not absolute. He finds difficulties in his way:—

“ Were the island comparatively destitute of inhabitants, or occupied by a kindred race, the President should regard it as a most desirable acquisition; but under existing circumstances, he should look upon its incorporation into the Union as a very hazardous measure:—”

And he is opposed to acquiring it *at present*, even with the free assent of Spain. His very able and shrewd Secretary of State goes somewhat further, and urges *domestic reasons* as militating against its acquisition *at present*. There is, then, to be a time when, such *reasons* existing no longer, it may become desirable to acquire it? For it is admitted that its acquisition *might, in certain contingencies, be almost essential to our safety*. Let southern Senators, especially, ponder upon this, and ask themselves, what are those *domestic reasons* which exist now and may not exist hereafter? Are we to wait until Lord Palmerston’s views with respect to the policy which should prevail in the Spanish councils concerning Cuba, be realized? Shall we wait “ *that measures be adopted for contenting the people of Cuba, with a view to secure the connection between that island and the Spanish Crown; as it must be evident that if the negro population of Cuba were rendered free, that fact would create a most powerful element of resistance to any scheme for annexing Cuba to the United States, where slavery exists?* ” Do southern Senators understand that even in the opinion of Mr. Fillmore, and of his Secretary of State, Cuba is bound to be eventually ours? And hear they not the portentous warning sent forth through the *Heraldo* of Madrid, which proclaims that “ it is well for all to know, whether native or foreign, that the Island of Cuba can only be Spanish or African,” adding that, “ should the day come when the Spaniards should be found to abandon her, they will do so by BEQUEATHING THEIR SWAT TO THE BLACKS.”

Are Senators sincere in their professions? Do they mean seriously to purchase Cuba? They give up, then, the settled policy of the past, and belie the repeated asseverations made by America’s statesmen, that her only wish was that Spain should retain its possession. We play into the hands of the British writers who denounce our duplicity to the world, and maintain that while we seemed but to fear the intentions of foreign Powers against Cuba, we had all along an eye on making it ours.

It is not an uncommon occurrence with trans-Atlantic papers to taunt us, and to taunt us unsparingly, with the charge of hypocrisy, and of being addicted to uncontrollable grasping propensities. I have already alluded to the vast system of buccaneering pursued by England in East India, and by France in Algiers. England, especially, is welcome to find fault with us on account of the pretended filibustering tendencies exhibited by our people. If such tendencies actually exist, we have from whom to claim the inheritance. There is extant a most curious and interesting scheme of buccaneering, bearing no later date than May 14th, 1739, found in the Archives of England, the original of which, under circumstances which it is unnecessary I should state, has found its way to this continent, and was, a few days ago, placed in my hands by a kind and discreet friend. It is worth perusing.

A Proposall to take the Island of Cuba with very little Expense to England by a Force rais'd in the American Colonys.

If the Crown of England could become posses'd of the Island of Cuba, that Key of all America, no man of knowledge can denye but that Great Britain, in that case, must become posses'd of the whole

Trade of the Spanish Empire there ; and if the simple Priviledge of trading with those People upon very high Terms is now become one of the greatest Prizes contended for by all the Powers of Europe, sure England will not neglect any opportunity which is offer'd of acquiring such a possession as must Infallibly Secure that whole Invaluable trade to its Subjects alone, especially since Great Britain is now in a fair way of loosing all the Trade She has hitherto had with those parts. It is proposed, therefore, to take Cuba without putting England to any Material Expense, or trouble, in ye following manner, (viz :)

For a person of conduct and experience to be Commission'd from hence, for the Chief Command in this Expedition, to take Cuba, &c. That as soon as such person is so commiss'd and properly instructed, He is to repair, with all Expedition, to America, and at the same time another proper person should be Commission'd & sent to America with Instructions to begin at the most Northern Colony, and proceed from one Province to another, and apply to ye several Governments for each of them, according to their respective Capacities, to furnish their Quota of proper Transports, with 6 months provisions in each for as many men as they will severally carry ; and that each Province, according to the number of Transports they severally furnish, shall raise a sufficient number of men to fill them, compleatly arm'd with ammunition, &c. That the number of men thus rais'd and arm'd shall consist of 10,000 ; and at the same time yt such persons are commission'd and sent away it will be necessary to send Instructions of the same Import to the several Governors in America to Issue orders, and give their best assistance, to fitt out, with all Expedition, such Transports, &c., and men so equip'd.

That when each Province has furnish'd their Quota of Transports and Men, according to their abilities, these shall immediately repair to one Place appointed, which may be at South Carolina, and from thence proceed, under the command and direction of the person to be Commission'd from hence. They may (if it shall appear advisable) in their passage make a faint to take St. Augustine, and having manag'd that strategem properly, they are to proceed to the Island of Cuba, and Land in the Bay of Matances, that being a good Harbour and not Guarded, yet lying the nearest of any other proper one to ye Havana. Here they shall land 7 or 8000 men, more or less, as necessity shall require, and with that Force to March down and pitch at a proper distance to surround the Havana and cutt off all manner of provissons—going thereto by land, at the same time that some ships shall ly before the town to prevent any provisions or relief coming to it by sea ; in which situation that Important Place must surrender in a very short time. In order to render this Conquest more sure and Expeditions, it will be necessary to send 6 or 8 60-guns Ships and two Bomb Keches, with about 2,000 Troops on Board them, which, if necessary, may be joyn'd by some of ye station ships now in America. These ships of Warr are intended, some to ly before the Havana to play against ye town and cutt off all relief and provisions by sea, while the American forces besiege it by land ; and the rest of the ships are to take care of the Gard da Coaste.

These 10,000 men being furnished and maintained by the several colonies in America, will render the conquest of this important place not only secretly secure, but very cheap to England ; for that number of forces being raised there, will, with greater certainty, conquer that place than 40,000 men would, to be sent from Britain, because they are inured to the American climate, and will live soberer than Britons can be prevailed to do. By these forces, and by them only, every man of judgment who knows the situation of that place, and will speak with truth and candor, will lay it down as a fact that it is to be gained with great certainty in the way proposed ; and if it can be thus gained, upon such easy terms to England, it would be offering an affront to the understanding of every man of sense to pretend to recount the unlimited advantages which must accrue to Great Britain from its being possessed of the Island of Cuba alone.

If the conquest of Cuba is effected, a small part of the forces which does that, may, with very little trouble, take Porto Rico, and St Augustine if it will appear advisable so to do. The British colonies in America lying so near the object in view, before the knowledge of the proposed attempt can reach to Europe, the whole design will be executed.

It may be asked how it is possible to go upon the proposed expedition without its being known by inquisitive diligent foreign spies, since ships of war are to be sent from England ? In answer to that 'tis to be hoped England can be as politic as her neighbors, (viz :) look one way and steer the contrary. It may, for this purpose, be given out by some that England is going to reinforce some of its colonies, by others that she is going to resume the settlement of Darien, &c. In short there is no human appearance of this attempt miscarrying if the knowledge of it is confined to a cabinet council, and a fit person appointed for the command. The proposer is so well assured of his own knowledge that the American people can be brought by proper management to fit out the transports, and raise the men proposed, that he will undertake to accomplish it by his own personal application without either view or inclination of cutting out or accepting of any place of command of profit in the whole transaction.

If there be an inclination to attempt this greatest of acquisitions, it is presumed no material objection can be made to the nature of the proposal. It may be urged, indeed, yet it will be dishonorable to make such an attempt while there is a treaty on foot with Spain ; but such an object must stand or fall by the wisdom and at the discretion of his Majesty's ministers ; though 'tis humbly presumed if

the word politic be not an empty sound, that objection nor none like it can hold. It is to be observed that if the preparation of the transports and men proposed is not to be set on foot 'till it is seen that nothing can be done with the court of Spain, by treaty, for the advantage of the British nation, it will then be too late to begin to prepare and collect them. It is presumed they should be prepared as soon as possible, in order to be collected and ready to go on upon the attack when necessity may make it proper; and if it shall appear that there will be no occasion to make such an attempt after they got in readiness, the design may be laid aside without inconvenience to England in either case.

It may be asked, were Cuba taken how would it be garrisoned without forces from England? for 'tis to be understood that the American people who are proposed to be raised must not be compelled to stay in the garrison against their own inclination. In answer to that 'tis sufficient now to say that the proposer has also conceived a pretty certain method to garrison not only that, but all the places mentioned, if they are taken without much expense to England, but which he begs leave to reserve to himself, it being too long to insert here, 'till he sees how this proposal will be approved of. J. H.

Endorsed proposal for taking Cuba in America. In Mr. Hamilton's of May the 14, 1739.

Had I suppressed the date of that document, and the name of the great power connected with it, Senators might have supposed that I was reading from some stray paper, fallen from the portfolio of General Lopez. But it is truly a British conception; and that it was entertained by the British Government, Senators will have but little doubt, when, upon perusing the correspondence sent us yesterday by the Executive, they will come to that part of it which brings to light a letter from Sir William Pultney to Admiral Vernon, having date August 27th, 1740, where, speaking of Cuba, "**TAKE AND HOLD**" says he, *be the cry*, for, "*when we are possessed of it, the whole world will not be able to dispossess us again.*"

Nor should Spain show herself over-sensitive about such undertakings. Know we not that but a few years ago a general of some repute (Flores) found the coffers of the Queen Mother open to him, that he might organize an expedition to conquer Equador, and establish a monarchy there, under one of Christina's sons by the Duke of Rianzares? If the papers of that day deserve any credit, Istaritz, who was then at the head of the Spanish Cabinet, so far favored the undertaking that he allowed Flores to take from the ranks of the army some of the best officers, furnishing them with such passports as would enable them to engage in the adventure without losing their rank at home. Men, under their lead, gathered from all parts of the kingdom, and assembled to the number of two thousand at Santander, where they could be seen during two entire months, parading publicly with Flores's colors. The whole scheme was afterwards defeated, through the agency of the British Government, which, dissatisfied with the state of affairs in Spain, and especially with certain transactions in which Christina was supposed to have favored the interests of France, stopped the gathering of an equal number of troops already enrolled, and about to depart on board of the two steamers then in the Thames, seized the steamers, and defeated the whole plan. We have seen the identical vessels, restored afterwards to Queen Christina, in part compensation for her disbursements, plying in the waters of Havana, under the names of Cetro and Tridente?

Why, I am afraid there was something of the "filibuster" in the American general, who, in 1812, misreading the instructions given to him by Mr. Monroe, then Secretary of State, took forcible possession of Amelia Island and Pensacola; and even in Mr. Monroe himself, who, while disavowing the act of the unmindful general, advised the retaining of the point taken for an amicable adjustment with Spain.

In his letter of April 10th, of the same year, to Mr. Mitchell, Governor of Georgia, Mr. Monroe says:

"The policy of the law and of the President is not to wrest the province from Spain, but only to occupy it with a view to prevent its falling into the hands of any foreign Power, and to hold that pledge under the existing peculiarity of the circumstances of the Spanish monarchy, for a just result in an amicable negotiation with Spain."

He was a “filibuster” (Hmlton) who, in 1797, strove so hard to organize an invasion of the Hispano-American colonies under the protection of this Government, and in concert with General Miranda, with a view to help those colonies towards their independence. There were “filibusters” among those who, in 1819, '20 and '21, rushed from our shores to the Mexican main, with arms and ammunition, and so effectually assisted in bringing about the overthrow of the Spanish rule there; and among those who, in 1836, could be seen parading publicly in the streets and thoroughfares of New Orleans, under the inspiring eye of General Andrew Jackson, preparatory to their joining the Texans in their struggle against Mexico. Ay, sir, and I have shown that there might be found some “filibustering” in the President’s message. But I assure you that there is much of it in Mr. Everett’s letter—a document which needs no eulogies of mine, as it goes now the rounds of the country, escorted by the well-deserved commendations of the highest intellects of this body. In it the Secretary of State despairs to confine himself to the mere contingency of a disposition on the part of Spain to alienate Cuba. He boldly approaches the very heart of the question, and claims at the outset that “**THE CONDITION OF CUBA IS MAINLY AN AMERICAN QUESTION.**” This, I suppose, is intended to be a sufficient reply to the assertion in Mr. De Turgot’s instructions to Mr. De Sartige, “that the condition of the Island is of *no less importance to the relations existing between the great maritime Powers than to the interests of Spain herself;*” and he proudly declines entering into obligations that would impose a permanent disability on the American Government, and prevent it, “*under any future change of circumstances, from doing what has been so often done in time past,*” for the possession of the island might, under certain contingencies, “**BE ALMOST ESSENTIAL TO OUR SAFETY.**” He vindicates the law of progress, which is “*us organic and vital in the youth of States as of individual men.*”

But mark how careful he is to remind Spain that while the President will never, by word or deed, question her title or shake her possession, she should not indulge deceitful dreams. Speaking of the present condition of the island, he asks if “it can be expected to last very long?”—“Can it resist the mighty current in the fortunes of the world?” And, referring anew to the onward tendencies of our people, how contemptuously he touches upon the impotency of conventions to arrest “**THE LAW OF AMERICAN GROWTH AND PROGRESS!**”

But while I am most willing to join in every commendation which has been bestowed upon that most important document, I cannot overlook its remissness in not rebuking the impudent threat implied in the very first sentences of both the communications sent to Messrs. De Sartige and Crampton by the Cabinets of Paris and St. James. With the exception of the paragraph through which Mr. De Turgot reminds the American Government of the orders sent to the British and French naval forces in the Gulf of Mexico, with a view to protect the Island of Cuba against new attempts at invading it, and wherein he asserts that the great maritime Powers have, in the destinies of that island, *an interest equal to that of Spain herself*—with that exception, the two communications are identical. And the presumptuous intermeddlers hesitate not to declare that we are to be made responsible for any repetition of such “*attacks as have lately been made on the Island of Cuba by lawless bands of adventurers from the United States;*” for “*these attacks have engaged the serious attention of their Majesties’ Governments—the more especially as they are most anxious that the friendly relations now existing between those Governments and the United States SHOULD NOT BE ENDANGERED, as they might be by a repetition of such attacks.*”

Are you not struck, Mr. President,—are not Senators struck,—with the haughty tone which pervades these communications? Do we mean to bear that England and France should speak to us in so arrogant and menacing a language? Are we to bend submissively to their dictation? Had we met them as it behoves a mighty nation like ours, when they presumed to career their fleets over the Gulf, and to cruise between Cuba and our shores, with the avowed design of constituting themselves the supervisors of our movements in those waters, and of inquiring and determining “*with what intent*” adventurers of *ANY NATION* might attempt to land on the Island of Cuba;—had we insisted upon those explanations being given which Mr. Crittenden, then Secretary of State, had required at the hands of the British Minister;—it will hardly be supposed that we would at this day be approached in the supercilious style with which we are given to understand that we must henceforth hold ourselves responsible for any attempt which it may please *adventurers of any nation* to make on the Island of Cuba.

But will not Senators ask themselves, What is that interest which thus prompts France and England to interfere with our concerns, and to dictate to us what policy we should pursue? What are the relations now existing between those Powers which interest them in the destinies of Cuba as deeply as Spain can be? I am afraid, Mr. President, there are storms in the answer. I can hardly account for the forbearance which we have of late been in the habit of exhibiting, whenever we have found ourselves in conflict with foreign pretensions, and especially whenever we have had to meet the exactions of England. The nations of the world know that we cannot be willing to disparage ourselves in their eyes, and to endanger the high position which we can so easily hold at their council-board. But we cannot expect to retain our character as one of the great Powers of the earth unless we jealously watch what contingencies might put it in peril. And of all the duties imposed upon Government, there is none whose accomplishment is more essential to its own preservation than that of providing for the exigencies of an impending future. The right of self-preservation is paramount to all other rights, and lends sanction to whatever measures necessity may impel a nation to pursue in order to vindicate and maintain itself. Under what requirements our country may be placed by the late demonstrations through which France and England have manifested their restlessness with reference to our apprehended designs, it will be for those, and for those alone, to determine who, when the proper occasion arises, shall be at the head of the Government. In the meantime, however, I am indisposed to yield my assent to any policy that would divorce us from the great principles and doctrines laid down by those eminent men who, under the pressure of a fearful crisis, took counsel from their duty and not from their fears. Those principles and doctrines have been presented to us by the distinguished Senator from Michigan (Mr. CASS) with such lucidity of exposition and force of argument, that I had imagined it would hardly be contested that they constituted one of the main articles of our political and diplomatic creed, and extended to all contingencies which might arise, out of the position which we have occupied ever since 1823, and still now occupy, with reference to the other Powers of this continent. Yet, much to my surprise, and still more to my regret, I find my friend from Virginia (Mr. MASON) arrayed in full armor against their being allowed a virtue through which they might be extended beyond the narrow circle of the incidents in which they originated. The merits of that rather new view of the question are well worth

being tested. Let us have a fair understanding of them. In his message of December 2d, 1833, Mr. Monroe lays down the two following propositions:

First. "The American **CONTINENT**, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European Power."

Second. "The United States consider any attempt on the part of European Powers to extend **THEIR SYSTEM** to *any portion* of this hemisphere as **DANGEROUS TO THEIR PEACE AND SAFETY.**"

The negotiations brought about between this Government and that of Russia, in consequence of the ukase through which the Czar was claiming supremacy over the Northern Pacific sea, to the exclusion of all other Powers, had been deemed by Mr. Monroe a proper occasion for asserting the principle involved in the first of these propositions. But the motives of his proclaiming it to the world were foreign to those negotiations, which had ended in its practical recognition by the Czar. Its reassertion in the message looked, therefore, to other occurrences which had lately transpired, and to meet which the policy implied in the second proposition had been adopted.

Now, what were the circumstances that gave birth to, and furnished an occasion for, the proclamation of such a doctrine? Was it any demonstration of hostility on the part of any of the European Powers against America? Not in the least. It was "the unsettled state of Europe;" the fact that "the allied Powers had thought it proper, on a principle satisfactory to themselves, to interpose by force in the internal concerns"—of whom? Of America? By no means; but "of Spain." And if we ask why this sensibility about an interposition, on the part of European Powers, with the concerns of Spain? We have an answer in the words of Mr. Monroe himself. Says he:

"The question of the extent to which such interposition might be carried *on the same principle*, was one in which all independent Powers whose governments differed from theirs were interested, even the most remote; and surely **NONE MORE SO THAN THE UNITED STATES.**"

To the statesmen of that day, if I may be permitted to use the language of a most accomplished and able writer on American diplomacy, (Mr. Henry Winter Davis,) the question was not "whether the threatening cloud arose in Europe or America, but whether it was likely to burst upon us." We have Mr. John Quincy Adams's assurance that both those principles were meant to be enforced as a *permanent* rule of American policy. In his message of March 15, 1836, he tells us of the first, that it had been assumed in the negotiations with Russia; and that it rested upon a course of reasoning equally simple and conclusive, because, "with the exception of the existing European colonies, which it was in no wise intended to disturb, the two continents consisted of several sovereign and independent nations, whose territories covered their whole surface;" and because "by this, their independent condition, the United States enjoyed the right of commercial intercourse with every part of their possessions." And "to attempt the establishment of a colony in such possessions would be to usurp, to the exclusion of others, a commercial intercourse which was the common possession of all." We see it stated, also, in the same message, that one of the main objects of the Panama Congress was "to take into consideration the means of making effectual the assertion of **THAT principle**, as well as the means of resisting interference from abroad with the domestic concerns of the American Governments." But should this not satisfy my friend from Virginia (Mr. Mason) that the import of those two principles

extended beyond the circumstances that gave them birth, I would at least have evidence to show how strangely mistaken he was when he thought he discovered in Mr. Rush's Notes on his mission to England, convincing intimations of his having entertained, in reference to the same question, the restricted views which the honorable Senator has chosen to express. In his communication to the American Secretary of State, dated April 30, 1823, he will find the impressive remark, that Mr. Rush was "fully sensible of the magnitude of the subjects to be treated of, and of their momentous bearings, *in present and future ages*, upon the interests, the welfare, and the honor of the United States."

These doctrines had originated in the principle of *proximity*, which all writers on public law admit to be the paramount rule of a nation's policy with reference to all matters that may endanger its safety. Rufus King, while our Minister to England, in 1801, had an eye on that principle, when, taking the alarm at the rumored cession of Louisiana by Spain to France, he presumed to interpose his objections to let any European Power make new acquisitions on this continent, and to insist that Louisiana should remain in the possession of Spain, if it were not to fall into that of the United States. How wittingly he quotes the unsparing sarcasm of Montesquieu, who remarks that "it is happy for trading Powers that God has permitted Turks and Spaniards to be in the world, since, of all nations, they are the most proper to possess a great empire with insignificance." Mr. Livingston, then our Minister to France, is still more restless than Mr. King himself. While industriously engaged in seeking information with reference to the true state of things, he takes occasion to allude to certain mischievous proceedings had, on the part of Spanish officials at New Orleans, towards citizens of the United States, and unmercifully expresses the wish that our Government may avail itself of *the pretence* Spain has given us, at once to *take possession* of Louisiana. "It will be best," says he, "to treat with the subject in our hands."

Thus early sprung up in the minds of our statesmen the consciousness of the impending danger attaching to any enterprise through which foreign Powers might seek to resume or extend their dominion over this continent. And when the days of Mr. Monroe came, what had assumed but the form of a suggestion in 1801, grew up to the dignity of an axiom. And, indeed, sir, it matters little whether or not Mr. Monroe's sentiments were intended to reach other cases than that on the occasion of which he thought proper to proclaim them to the world. They have infused themselves into the national mind; and the power exists not that can divest them of their ominous signification. They are deeply seated in every American heart, and dislodge them thence who can. Besides, sir, what is the use of debating whether they were or not intended for future ages? Are they not adapted to our present condition? And shall we repudiate them when we are taunted with the threats of Powers smarting under what they consider to be the inflictions of our growing greatness?

Sir, I am against this Government favoring any scheme through which an attempt might be made to wrest Cuba from Spain, in violation of the strictest precepts of the law of nations. But it were idle for us to disguise that there are contingencies under which it might not be possible for us to avert the necessity of laying hands over it. Mr. Everett himself cannot forbear setting forth those circumstances which might, at no distant day, bring the great crisis within the pale of immediate action. How candidly he avows that no administration of this Government, however strong in the public confidence, in other respects, could stand a

day under the odium of having entered with the great Powers of Europe into stipulations through which the exigencies arising out of those circumstances might be repudiated! Most skillfully does his letter present to the consideration of the British and French Ministers the various contingencies that might press upon us the necessity of its acquisition. See how guardedly, and yet how pointedly, they are enumerated in the closing page of that most curious and interesting document. *"First, "A change of circumstances."* What those circumstances be, it is not for me to say; I will, however, take it for granted that they have some reference to those *domestic reasons* which disincline the President, *at present*, to effect its acquisition on any terms. *Second, the prospect of an "amicable arrangement with Spain;"* and this, I suppose, means a purchase, should ever Spain make up her mind to sell. *Third, "an act in a lawful war;"* and that suggests the idea of conquest. *Fourth, "the consent of the inhabitants;"* and this looks to their independence. The *fifth* is *"the overruling necessity of self-preservation;"* and lays open before us the full scope of all those complications I had occasion to allude to, which may, from hour to hour, ask at our hands prompt and energetic action.

But, sir, how far is all this from the true state of the national sentiment! I am for disguising nothing. Truth is not only a virtue; it is wisdom. Perhaps the time is not far distant when the question of the possession of Cuba may have to be weighed as a contest of power in the scale of war. And while it is for us openly to avow what unbending exigencies a stern and proximate future may have in store for our coming rulers, it is well that Spain herself should ponder on what her perils may be, under the pressure of such exigencies.

Sir, I am against purchasing Cuba. The idea must be abandoned. It is obsolete. Whoever knows anything of the high-toned susceptibilities of Castilian pride, would hardly presume to counsel the approach of so delicate a question as of one that could be dealt with through mere dollars and cents. I am unwilling to wound those susceptibilities. But they are not the only ones in the way of a purchase. There are others which ought also to be spared. One would hardly conceive of any inducement that could prompt the inhabitants of Cuba to join us in the attitude in which they would be placed by a purchase. They are proud and haughty, and might be unwilling to accept even their liberation, if purchased at a sacrifice of what they deemed their dignity and honor. Were it not better for Spain to take counsel from the past, and turn to profit the history of her own relations, as well as that of the relations of England, with the colonies of this continent? What has it availed them to resist the wisdom of those statesmen who advised a reconciliation of their mutual interest and wishes upon the basis of the independence of the colonists? Had she not better bravely face the future and ask herself if it be not time for her to realize that mighty boast of Canning with respect to what remains of her colonies within the waters of this continent, by calling a new nation into existence? Might she not, by treaty, secure what there is valuable in the commerce of that island? And would not this political child of her old age willingly come forth, and, assuming its share of the burdens which so heavily load her, aid towards the restoration of her finances, and thereby facilitate those improvements which of late have marked a new era in the tendencies of Spain, and may prepare for her destinies worthy of her past?

To us, Mr. President, the independence of Cuba is just as desirable as her annexation to this Confederacy. That there is a spirit among its inhabitants which

must, sooner or later rouse them to a decisive stand against their present rulers, cannot be the subject of a doubt with any thinking man. The very disasters which have befallen those who, in times past, hoisted the banner of rebellion, will be but fresh inducements for renewing the attempt. Misfortune but nerves those whose breasts shelter noble aspirations; and while great and powerful emotions spring from impending dangers, a host of virtues rise in arms to meet them.

Let not Spain be deceived. Let her not slumber, wrapped in deceitful security. One repels not the invasion of advancing years by the remembrances of youth. Cuba cannot long be hers; and its becoming African would not redeem its loss. We can have no wish that it become a bone of contention between her and us. As long as the Powers of Europe shall not presume to interfere with the relations which its proximity to our shore, and the possibility of its being made an obstruction to one of our great commercial outlets, must necessarily create between her and us, she need apprehend no tampering on our part with any scheme that may be devised against its remaining under her dominion. Should, however, her sons assert and vindicate the eternal rights of freemen, and, being grown to manhood, claim to be their own rulers, let her not take offence at our pursuing towards them the course which we pursued towards her other colonies, when they rose in their might and claimed their emancipation. When a country reaches that amplitude of consequence and power which reveals its ability to suffice to its own government, we deem that it becomes of right entitled to independence of State.

I am equally unwilling to disguise that by suffering England and France to assume over her a kind of tutorship, and to become the guardians and sponsors of her sovereignty, Spain has surrendered her main title to the dominion of such possessions as she thus places under the strong arm of those Powers. The complications arising from that very state of things are but the best calculated to produce the very necessity which, under peculiar circumstances, and with the law of nations pleading for us, might justify on our part one of those decisive measures which are not uncommon in the history of nations, and would entirely invert the relations in which we stand to her. This I most earnestly wish to avoid. But whatever there be in reserve for us, in a more or less distant future, I am willing to leave it for the untrammelled wisdom of those in whose keeping our destinies will soon be.

However, let not Spain be unmindful of her true position, and think that she can, by unworthy devices, protect her possessions against their impending doom. In vain would she let the island sink into the ocean rather than see it transferred to any other Power. Should the hurricane ever rage, the island will still be found looming above the waters, and she will not cease to smile upon the angry wave, though her sovereignty should disappear in the storm. When that time shall come, neither the surges of the sea, nor her forts, nor her cannon, nor her garotes, nor the edicts of her Goliathos, will save her from our mighty grasp. Hear the historian: "In vain did Sabinus place ancestral statues upon the threshold of the gates of the Capitol, that they might prevent the enemy from penetrating, torch in hand. The very eagles supporting the arches took fire, and communicated it to the entire city."

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